

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E. O. 11652:NA
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PDEV, UK
SUBJECT: DEVOLUTION: GOVERNMENT MAJORITY OF 45

REF: A. LONDON 20195; B. LONDON 20061,
C. LONDON 19966; D. 19409

SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL DEVOLUTION
BILL PASSED SECOND READING DECEMBER 16, AFTER FOUR
DAYS DEBATE, WITH MAJORITY OF 45. 27 TORY AND 29
LABOR ABSTENTIONS, AND A SMALLER NUMBER OF BOTH TORY
AND LABOR DEFIANCES OF THREE-LINE WHIP. GOVERNMENT
PROMISED AGAIN REFERENDA OF AS YET UNDISCLOSED DESIGN
IN SCOTLAND AND WALES BEFORE ROYAL ASSENT. END SUMMARY
1. FOLLOWING FOUR DAYS OF DEBATE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS,
GOVERNMENT'S CONTROVERSIAL DEVOLUTION BILL PASSED
SECOND READING 292-247 (GOVERNMENT MAJORITY OF 45).
GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO HOLD ITS OWN DISSIDENTS DOWN
TO 29 ABSTENTIONS AND TEN WHO VOTED AGAINST, PRIMARILY
BY DEVICE OF RESTATING COMMITMENT TO HOLDING REFERENDA
IN SCOTLAND AND WALES BEFORE BILL BECOMES LAW.

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2. SIMILAR PATTERNS OF DISARRAY AROSE ON TORY SIDE,
WITH FIVE SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT AND 27 ABSTENTIONS.
LEADING LIGHT IN LATTER GROUP WAS FORMER LEADER HEATH,
WHO SPOKE PASSIONATELY (FOR HIM) OF HIS LONG-STANDING
COMMITMENT TO DEVOLUTION.

3. A THIRD RESIGNATION FROM THE TORY TEAM WAS FINALLY ACCEPTED (DEPUTY WHIP JOHN CORRIE), WHILE ANOTHER WAS REJECTED FOR THE SECOND TIME (SPOKESMAN FOR ENERGY HAMISH GRAY).

4. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE DECLINED TO CALL AMENDMENT SIGNED BY 151 MPS FROM BOTH MAJOR PARTIES WHICH DEMANDED REFERENDA AS A CONDITION FOR PASSING THE BILL'S SECOND READING. THE SPEAKER, IN GIVING HIS JUDGMENT, SAID THAT PASSAGE OF THE AMENDMENT WOULD MEAN DEFEAT OF THE BILL ITSELF (HE DECLINED TO EXPAND THIS.). GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO DISCUSSION OF DETAILS OF REFERENDA'S LANGUAGE AND TIMING BUT MADE CLEAR THAT REFERENDUM WOULD NOT BE HELD IN ENGLAND.

SPIERS

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